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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to identify the attitudes of parents, administrators, and teachers about the Reading Recovery[R] program in Maine. The report provides samples of comments and quality ratings as assessed by the standard annual survey forms and supplements the full State of Maine Reading Recovery[R] 1997-1998 Report and Evaluation. It states that, as part of program evaluation for Reading Recovery[R] in Maine, parents, administrators, Reading Recovery[R] teachers, and classroom teachers responded to open-ended survey questions and rated the program along dimensions of quality. It reports that the attitudes about the Reading Recovery[R] program were very positive. (NKA)

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Reading Recovery®

Qualitative Summaries Report for Maine 1997-1998

Funding for evaluation provided by the Maine Department of Education

December 1998

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A Word About This Report

The purpose of this report is to identify the attitudes of parents, administrators, and teachers about the Reading Recovery® program in Maine. It provides samples of comments and quality ratings as assessed by the standard annual survey forms. This report supplements the full State of Maine Reading Recovery® 1997-1998 Report and Evaluation.

Maine Reading Recovery® Sites

Belfast
Benton
Bethel
Caribou
Hancock/Washington County Consortium
Howland/Enfield Station
Southern Maine Consortium:
Westbrook, Wiscasset, South Portland

Reading Recovery® Teacher Leaders

Laura Cook
Margaret Hawkins
Patricia Jackman
Judith Karam
Rebecca Malliloux
Charles Potter
Gael Romei
Nancy Todd

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Overview

As part of program evaluation for Reading Recovery® in Maine, parents, administrators, Reading Recovery teachers (both trained and in-training), and classroom teachers responded to open-ended survey questions and rated the program along dimensions of quality. Surveys were returned to Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders, who summarized the responses in their respective sites and then sent the summaries and a sample of representative responses to the Center for Early Literacy at the University of Maine. This report synthesizes and summarizes the responses received across the State. The full State of Maine Reading Recovery® Report and Evaluation 1997-1998 will include a brief sample of what is contained in this report.

Response Rate

Unique questionnaires were distributed to each of five groups: administrators, trained Reading Recovery teachers, Reading Recovery teachers in training, classroom teachers, and parents. Response was voluntary. Each form of questionnaire included questions relevant to its group of respondents. Table 1 presents the number of distributed and returned questionnaires, and response rates, both for each group as well as for Reading Recovery sites overall.

Response rates were very high for all five groups of respondents, ranging from 69.5% for parents to 94.9% for Reading Recovery teachers in training. Overall in the state of Maine, 76.3% of distributed questionnaires were returned.

Table 1. Response Rates.

Questionnaire	Returned / Distributed	Response Rate
Parents	1192/1716	69.5%
Administrators	194/240	80.8%
Trained Teachers	205/221	92.8%
Teachers in Training	37/39	94.9%
Classroom Teachers	505/578	87.4%
Overall	2133/2794	76.3%

Executive Summary

The attitudes about the Reading Recovery® program were very positive. An area of concern is the need for more resources. An overview of comments appears below and a representative sample of comments from each group of respondents appear in the following pages.

"I think it would be a great idea to expand the program so more children would benefit earlier in the year." (Parent)

"I understand more how to implement the program." (Trained Reading Recovery Teacher)

"I am concerned about having the program available for all students who qualify." (Administrator)

"I have raised my expectations of what these children can do." (Reading Recovery Teacher in Training)

"There are concerns that the children who could most benefit from the program do not get the services." (Classroom Teacher)

Parents

Of the 1716 questionnaires distributed, 1192 were returned for a response rate of 70%. When asked to "Circle number below which best describes Reading Recovery," where 1 represented, "not a very good program" and 5 represented, "a very good program," the mean response was 4.8. Out of 1188 who responded, 1178 parents, or 99%, indicated that it was a good or very good program. Responses totals and percentages are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Number of responses for each scale value to the question for classroom teachers, "Circle number below which best describes Reading Recovery."

Likert Scale Response	1 not a very good program	2	3	4 a very good program	5	Total responses
Number	1	1	11	200	975	1188
Percentage	0	0	0.1	16.8	82.1	100

Comments from parents of Reading Recovery children are filled with praise for the program.

"Reading Recovery has made reading more enjoyable, fun, enthusiastic, with a positively reinforced, structured atmosphere."

"I am pleased with the Reading Recovery program. I don't think we could have come this far without it."

Some teachers indicated that there was a great deal of response from parents when returning the questionnaires. Many had personal notes attached, addressed to the individual teachers. Their notes praised the program and thanked the teacher for the support and work with the children. On the questionnaires themselves, most of the parents expressed excitement about their child's love of reading.

"She loves to read! She picks up a book anytime and starts reading."

"We read at least 2 books every night, sometimes as many as 5!"

"He can read and understand what he reads. He has so much expression he's entertaining."

A number of parents described a dramatic improvement in their children's self-concept.

"My child doesn't say "I can't do things" anymore. He really tries very hard."
"I've seen him go from not wanting and not caring to wanting, asking and doing."

"He believes in himself, and tries to do more by himself."

"She is reading more and more on her own. She also has more confidence. It's made her feel really smart!"

"She's not as intimidated. It comes a lot easier. The stories make sense to her now and if it doesn't she goes back and reads it again until she does understand."

"He has gone from saying I can't read to reading everything he can get his hands on. Self-esteem has soared."

Some parents noted an improvement in other areas of the child's learning besides literacy.

"I think Reading Recovery has helped my child deal with change, school and home."

"He has skyrocketed in all his subjects and enjoys learning now because he understands it."

Finally, parents advocated continuation and expansion of the programs services.

"I think it would be a great idea to expand the program so more children would benefit earlier in the year."

Administrators

Of the 240 questionnaires distributed, 194 were returned for a response rate of 81%. When asked "What impact has implementing the Reading Recovery Program had in your school over the last 5 to 10 years," 137administrators, or 90% of those who responded, indicated that it had had a large or very large impact. Responses totals and percentages are presented in Table 2. The mean response was 4.3, on a scale that ranged from 1, "very little impact" to 5, "very large impact."

Comments from administrators indicated strong support for the program. Many acknowledged the decrease in Title 1 and Special Education referrals, as well as retentions, as a result of the program.

"Reading Recovery has nearly replaced Title 1A as we have known it. Retention has decreased significantly and Special Education placement has significantly decreased as well. Reading Recovery has been a successful intervention."

"Puts more emphasis on preventing problems."

"The program has allowed for more students to receive services within a shorter time frame and thus, in my estimation, has lowered the number of students needing reading support help at the upper grades."

"Data is showing that most of the students who have discontinued from Reading Recovery continue to read at or above grade level without additional services."

"Our program is just finishing its fifth year. The children who have been helped with Reading Recovery have not shown up in Title 1 or Special Education. Consequently the program appears to be very successful."

"This program has had a positive impact. Fewer referrals, no retentions, and Reading Recovery students are maintaining successful levels of reading skills and strategies."

"Since the Reading Recovery program started four years ago out test results have steadily progressed. Students are backed by a good, strong data."

Table 2. Number of responses for each scale value to the question for administrators, "What impact has implementing the Reading Recovery Program had in your school over the last 5 to 10 years?".

Likert Scale Response	1 very little impact	2	3	4	5 very large impact	Total responses
Number	1	3	12	75	62	153
Percentage	0.1	2.0	7.8	49.0	40.5	100

Some administrators acknowledged the benefits of understanding the individual needs of Reading Recovery children.

"This program has helped to change the way educators look at children with problems. There are less excuses and more attempts to unlock the key of understanding. Placements are more accurate."

"There is more interaction among educators to find the best method to enhance performance and understanding from children having difficulties."

Many administrators mentioned the impact that Reading Recovery has had on literacy teaching and assessment practices in the schools.

"The impact in this area has been dramatic over all. Our instructional and assessment programs have been revised dramatically."

"Techniques are used with other children who have not been in the Reading Recovery program and has great effects on their skills."

"Reading Recovery is becoming more understood, respected and responsible for professional growth."

"The program has had the most profound affect on the individual classroom teachers. The first and second grade teachers have received literacy training based on the Ohio State model. They are using running records and other screening devices and there is wonderful conversations about reading."

"Reading Recovery has increased the awareness of teaching methodology of reading throughout our school."

"We have shifted from a K-6 remedial program to reading failure prevention at grade one with ELLI support at K, 1, 2."

"The Reading Recovery Program has continued to support classroom teachers, Special Ed. staff and support staff. Many have learned valuable teaching techniques from our Reading Recovery Program and our Reading Recovery teacher."

Administrators also raised some concerns about the program. The majority of concerns revolved around not having enough Reading Recovery staff, the large amount of paperwork involved, and teacher turn over and/or "burn out". Others were centered around implementation issues.

"Difficult to assess. I am concerned that if students are eventually referred for other services later, parents often feel that it should have happened earlier...concerned that other services, i.e.. Title 1 have been cut back at the higher grade levels to provide funding for Reading Recovery. Many students are not getting services."

"I am concerned about having the program available for all students who qualify."

"In order to help with time away from students, you should have your continuing contact classes in the evening."

Trained Reading Recovery Teachers

Of the 221 questionnaires distributed, 205 were returned for a response rate of 93%. When asked to rate the statement "I have become a more effective Reading Recovery teacher this year" on a scale that ranged from 1, "strongly disagree" to 5, "strongly agree," the mean response was 4.2. Out of 190 who responded, 158 trained teachers, or 83%, indicated that they agreed. Response totals and percentages are presented in Table 3.

Comments from trained Reading Recovery teachers generally included statements affirming their support of the program. Some commented on their improvement and professional growth as teachers and the consequential benefit to the students. Others noted the progress being made toward integrating Reading Recovery teaching with the regular classroom instruction.

"My *observing of children* has improved. This has made me more aware of ways to provide students with opportunities to develop self-extending systems earlier in their programs."

"I'm becoming more skilled at creating a sense of community with classroom teachers."

"I understand more how to implement the program. Instead of just prompting for strategies, I am teaching students how to process text more effectively..."

Many trained teachers praised the continuing contact sessions and some requested a need for more colleague interaction.

"My continuing contact has brought up my level of thinking and reflecting in regards to observing young learners and making better teaching decisions."

"I feel that contact sessions are beneficial. The support of these sessions are really helpful."

"I think the cluster visits are extremely helpful because you get more honest, open and forthright feedback."

There were a few concerns raised by trained Reading Recovery teachers centered around having a lack of time to complete the "heavy paperwork" involved.

Table 3. Number of responses for each scale value to the question for trained teachers, "I have become a more effective Reading Recovery teacher this year."

Likert Scale Response	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 strongly agree	Total responses
Number	0	4	28	90	68	190
Percentage	0	2.1	14.7	47.4	35.8	100

Reading Recovery Teachers in Training

Of the 39 questionnaires distributed, 37 were returned for a response rate of 95%. When asked to rate the statement "My view of teaching low progress children how to read has changed considerably this year" on a scale that ranged from 1, "strongly disagree" to 5, "strongly agree," the mean response was 4.5. Out of 37 who responded, 34 teachers in training, or 92%, indicated that they agreed. Responses totals and percentages are presented in Table 4.

Comments from Reading Recovery teachers in training indicated enthusiasm for the program and excitement about the success of the teaching techniques.

"I have raised my expectations of what these children can do - I've seen that the highly intense focusing that Reading Recovery teaching provides results in success."

"I have seen children become more self-confident in their reading and writing. The prompting system really fosters inner control for the student and teacher."

"I have always believed low progress students could learn to read, but I did not have the skills and best methods to help them. This course has given me ways to helping these students be successful readers."

"I have observed that the process is as different for each child as the children are different from each other."

Some of the teachers in training offered suggestions for improvement of the training program.

"I would have learned more about helping students sooner by watching more lessons taught behind the glass by trained teachers. This would have been particiularly helpful at the beginning of the year."

"I wish there could be more colleague visits. I was in a school where I was alone and I felt isolated."

Table 4. Number of responses for each scale value to the question for teachers in training, "My view of teaching low progress children how to read has changed considerably this year."

Likert Scale Response	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 strongly agree	Total responses
Number	0	1	2	12	22	37
Percentage	0	2.7	5.4	32.4	59.5	100

Classroom Teachers

Of the 578 questionnaires distributed, 505 were returned for a response rate of 88%. When asked "What impact has Reading Recovery had on RR students' classroom performance," 429 classroom teachers, or 90% of those who responded, indicated that it had had a large or very large impact. Response totals and percentages are presented in Table 5. The mean response was 4.5, on a scale that ranged from 1, "very little impact" to 5, "very large impact."

Many comments from classroom teachers reflected their excitement about the progress of Reading Recovery children from their classrooms.

"Students have more strategies to try when meeting an unfamiliar word during reading. In writing they are more willing to try writing new words."

"Children are more willing to take risks and participate in classroom activities."

"The children seem so much more eager to participate in class and reading group."

"Students are more attentive to print and self-correct. They are more willing to read and write independently. They are more confident in taking risks. The students display a more positive attitude toward reading and are more apt to select reading as a choice activity."

"I think I'm aiming for higher levels for all the children."

A number of classroom teachers expressed enthusiasm about their own development from having implemented Reading Recovery strategies in the classroom.

"I pay much closer attention to strategies, giving the students more tools for independence. I also refer to parts of the Observation Survey when a literacy group is not progressing. This documentation has helped us keep our school-wide groupings flexible."

"I have learned so much about reading instruction through "Observing Young Learners" and the literacy teams in our school. Sharing of ideas, books and support is so helpful to us all."

Table 5. Number of responses for each scale value to the question for classroom teachers, "What impact has Reading Recovery had on RR students' classroom performance?"

Likert Scale Response	1 very little impact	2	3	4	5 very large impact	Total responses
Number	3	5	41	122	307	478
Percentage	0.6	1.0	8.6	25.5	64.2	100

"Many teachers are implementing strategies observed."

"I am much more conscious about assessing individual needs and strengths and building my instructing and review on that on-going knowledge."

A few classroom teachers commented on the professional environment that the program has created in the schools.

"Reading Recovery has sparked cooperation and a common dialogue between K-1-2 teachers."

Some classroom teachers expressed concern that more children could benefit from the program.

"There are concerns that the children who could most benefit from the program do not get the services."

"There are not enough children making it through the program."